

# Will I Survive?

## Grades 5-8

Hundreds of plants and animals around the world are threatened with extinction. As of January 2000, there are 102 threatened and endangered species in Tennessee. Sometimes when a problem is close to home, it becomes more real to young people. After this activity, students will understand more about the endangered and threatened species in their own state.

### Objectives

Students will be able to (1) describe some of Tennessee's endangered, threatened, extirpated, and extinct species; (2) identify specific threats to Tennessee's wildlife and plants; and (3) communicate what they have learned.

### Age

Grades 5-8

### Time

Will vary, but you should set aside at least two class periods, or approximately an hour on two different days, plus homework time.

### Setting

This activity takes place in three different locations—the classroom, the school library, and the student's home (should you decide to assign part of this activity as homework).

### Correlation

C: Life Science

F: Science in Personal and Social Perspectives

### Materials

- One copy of each of the species descriptions from this guide.
- Copies of the *Will I Survive?* project outline, one for each student.
- Large pieces of paper or poster board for drawing.
- Coloring materials – paints, crayons, or markers.
- Optional – copies of the ecosystem fact sheets.

### Preparation

■ The *Learn the Terms* vocabulary activity (Intermediate version) should precede this activity.

■ Read the *Species Descriptions* found in this guide, pgs. 24-79.

■ Make copies of the *Will I Survive?* project outline, pg. 127, and the species descriptions.

■ Consider conducting this activity before a regularly scheduled library period or organize a separate library period for the class to research their species.

### Procedure

1. Divide the class into pairs. Assign each pair/team a threatened or endangered species from this guide. Give them a copy of their species' description and the *Will I Survive?* project outline. For advanced readers, give them the ecosystem fact sheet that corresponds with their species. The Student Ecosystem Comparison Chart, pg. 105, may also be helpful to your student at any level.

2. Explain that they are to use the *Will I Survive?* project outline as a guide and the species descriptions as base line information to gather information on their species. Explain to the students that, upon completion, they will give a brief (no longer than 5 minutes) presentation of their research to the class.

3. Begin the research in the classroom, allowing time for students to review the information presented to them and time to ask questions about the project. When the students are ready, move to the school library, where they can collect additional information about the species, its ecosystem, and the threats causing its decline or extinction. Ask students to find one other source of information about their species. It is unlikely that library books will have much

information on the species themselves, as they are relatively unknown. Students will have the best chance of finding information searching the web. Refer to the *World Wide Web Links*, pg. 157, for help. The Internet is a valuable research tool for locating information and pictures of individual species.

4. Upon returning to the classroom, have the students create posters to use as "Presentation Visuals." These posters can depict the species itself, range maps threats to the species, actions needed to recover the species, or any information that will help illustrate the student's research.

5. If needed, have the students complete their projects and prepare for their presentations as a homework assignment.

6. The following day, or at another appropriate time, have the teams present their research to the class.

7. Display the presentation posters on classroom walls or on the walls of the school hallways.

### Evaluation

1. The "Project Outline" for *Will I Survive?* includes a section entitled "Class Review Question." Have each team devise a simple question about his or her species that will become part of the evaluation of this activity.

2. Following each presentation, have each team write their "Class Review Question" on the board. Also, ask the team to write the question on a 1/2 sheet of paper. Then fold the paper several times and place in a box or hat.

3. Have the students answer each of the questions on the board through class discussion and team sharings.

4. Ask each team to draw a question

from the hat. The team should read the question allowed to the class and then answer it.

5. The team that wrote the question should agree or disagree with the answer. If they disagree they should clarify the answer.

### **Extension #1**

As each presentation is conducted, have each student write the threats to their species on the board. There is no need to write the species name, just the threats. After the students have answered the “Class Review Question,” have them look at the list of threats on the board. Through class discussion, have the students make another list of the most common, recurring threats from the list on the board. For example, if loss of habitat was in the class threat list numerous times, it would make the new threat list. Discuss with the students whether the threats on this list are natural or caused by humans. If they are caused by humans, discuss with them what humans can do to decrease impacts to the species.

### **Extension #2**

Have the class organize a Tennessee Endangered Species Day. The class can do mini-presentations about their species for other classes and display their “visual” on the school bulletin boards.

# Will I Survive? Project Outline

Provide the following information about your species during your presentation. If certain information is not available about your species, indicate that during your presentation. If your species is extirpated or extinct, answer these questions in the past tense.

1. My status is:
2. I received this status on the following date:
3. I can be found in the following areas in Tennessee:
4. I can also be found in the following areas in the United States:
5. Scientists know these things about me:
6. I depend on the following Tennessee ecosystem:
7. My habitat is:
8. My role, or job, in my ecosystem is:
9. My numbers are dropping because:
10. Organizations involved in making sure I don't become extinct are:
11. The benefits I provide to humans are:
12. Things people can do to help me are:

List additional resources used for information: \_\_\_\_\_

## Class Review Question

Develop a simple question about your species to quiz your classmates with after your presentation!